

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are pending in this application. Of these pending claims, Claims 1-3 and 13-21 stand rejected; Claim 22 stands objected to, Claims 23-27 are withdrawn; and Claims 4-12 are allowed. By way of this paper, Claims 1, 21, and 22 have been amended; and new Claim 28 has been added herein.

The foregoing amendments and following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the outstanding office action, and are believed to place the application in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 14, 15, 19 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Paxton ('480) reference.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly point out that the moveable plunger includes a flexible material. Support for this amendment can be found in at least paragraph [0027] of the specification.

The flexible plunger of the present invention is sufficiently strong to compress the slipsheets while helping to reduce the likelihood of slipsheet material tearing off or becoming detached and remaining inside the pre-compression chamber. Accordingly, the flexible material plunger provides the present invention with an advantage when compared to rigid plungers.

The Paxton ('480) reference discloses a ram 48 that operates to push lettuce pulp into a tube 47 such that the pulp is forced against pulp already in tube 47. The pulp is formed into a rod-like shape during this process (Fig. 3; page 2, lines 61-67). The Paxton ('480) reference is silent on the plunger material. However, it appears that the plunger is made from a rigid material because the plunger is used to change the shape of the lettuce pulp to one that is rod-like in form. As such, it can not be said that the Paxton ('480) reference discloses a moveable plunger that includes a flexible material. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejection of Claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 3, 14, 15, and 19 depending from claim 1 are considered patentable for at least the same reasons set forth above which state a basis for the allowance of claim 1.

Claim 21 has been amended to more clearly point out that the moveable plunger is operable to move from the entrance of the pre-compression chamber to the exit aperture of the pre-compression chamber to sweep the volume of the pre-compression chamber. Support for this amendment can be found in at least paragraphs [0011], [0015], [0020], and [0021] of the specification.

Configuring the moveable plunger to move from the entrance of the pre-compression chamber to the exit aperture of the pre-compression chamber to sweep the volume of the pre-compression chamber helps to provide additional compacting so that a greater number of media sheets may be run through the system before requiring operator intervention to empty the slipsheet disposal receptacle or clear a blockage. Accordingly, this feature provides the present invention with an advantage when compared to plungers that do not move from the entrance to the exit of the chamber.

The Paxton ('480) reference discloses a hopper 40 having an entrance at a pair of rollers 37 and an exit at the end of a tube 47 (Fig. 3; page 2, lines 15-25). A ram 48 operates to push lettuce pulp into tube 47 (Fig. 3; page 2, lines 61-65). However, ram 48 does not move from the pair of rollers 37 to the end of tube 47. Instead, ram 48 moves through only the portion of hopper 40 that includes tube 47. As such, it can not be said that the Paxton ('480) reference discloses a plunger that is operable to move from the entrance of the pre-compression chamber to the exit aperture of the pre-compression chamber to sweep the volume of the pre-compression chamber. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejection of Claim 21 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 13, 16-18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the Lee ('466) reference.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly point out that the moveable plunger includes a flexible material. Support for this amendment can be found in at least paragraph [0027] of the specification.

The flexible plunger of the present invention is sufficiently strong to compress the slipsheets while helping to reduce the likelihood of slipsheet material tearing off or becoming detached and remaining inside the pre-compression chamber. Accordingly, the flexible material plunger provides the present invention with an advantage when compared to rigid plungers.

The Lee ('466) reference discloses a plate L that operates to compress shredded paper in compartment A1 (Fig. 1; col. 5, lines 37-40 and 49-58). The Lee ('466) reference is silent on the plate material. However, it appears that plate L is made from a rigid material because the paper discussed in the Lee ('466) reference is already shredded when it enters compartment A1. As such, the Lee ('466) reference is not concerned with reducing the likelihood of paper tearing off or becoming detached and remaining inside compartment A1. Therefore, it can not be said that the Lee ('466) reference discloses a moveable plunger that includes a flexible material. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejection of Claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 13, 16-18, and 20 depending from claim 1 are considered patentable for at least the same reasons set forth above which state a basis for the allowance of claim 1.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 22 stands objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 22 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants submit that amended claim 22 is present in allowable form. Accordingly, Applicants request allowance of amended claim 22.

New Claim

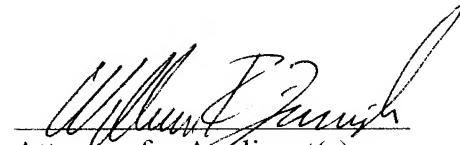
New claim 28, depending from claim 1, has been added herein. Support for new claim 28 can be found in at least claim 11 as originally filed. Claim 28 includes the feature of the flexible material being located on a face of the plunger, wherein the plunger comprises a rigid backbone supporting the flexible material face. Applicants respectfully submit that the feature of claim 28 is not disclosed by the prior art discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants request allowance of new claim 28.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that, in view of the above amendments and remarks, this application is now in condition for allowance, prompt notice of which is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned in the event that a phone interview will expedite prosecution of this application towards allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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If the Examiner is unable to reach the Applicant(s) Attorney at the telephone number provided, the Examiner is requested to communicate with Eastman Kodak Company Patent Operations at (585) 477-4656.